SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

PROJECT SUMMARY

REPORT DATE          PROJECT NAME                          PREPARED BY
October 5, 2018      Monthly Summary to School Committee of Key Actions  Jordana B. Harper, Superintendent

Media Coverage:
• Angelo Thomas returns home to coach basketball
• Greenfield students to join Green River cleanup
• Risky behaviors among local teens decline
• Franklin County Guide for Parents

Additional Attachments:
• Project Here Newsletter featuring Superintendent Harper with Attorney General Healey
• GPS “Now Hiring” Campaign with Print, Radio, and Social Media campaigns
• GPS “We’re Pumped About these Upcoming Events” Fall Events

STANDARD 1 - INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

• Recognized by the Attorney General for GPS’ Prevention Curriculum and asked to speak on a statewide panel
• Received and initiated review of Student Assessment Results and aligned goals to support achievement

STANDARD 2 – MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

• Ensured contractual process was followed in relation to hiring of Fall Coaches at GHS
• Proactively contacted Chief of Police, advised Administrators regarding safety, and apprised School Committee
• Designed employment campaign for district vacancies, including substitute teachers & IAs. Job Fair: 10/17
• Met with GHS Principal and GHS teacher to review Field Trip Planning for Spring 2019 (see Policy IJOA)

STANDARD 3 – FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• Invited by Attorney General to speak at press conference in Boston regarding substance prevention programs
• Launched next phase of School Messenger communications; initiated additional teacher training & support
• Attended Communities that Care Teen Health Survey release with School Committee Chair

STANDARD 4 – PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

• Arranged training for new Recording Secretary per AG’s guidelines with existing School Committee Secretary
• Provide frequent updates to School Committee, including frequent communication with the Chair (often daily)
• Participated in Town-School meeting with Mayor, School Committee Chair, Finance Director, Business Mgr
• Attended and spoke at all City Council and Community Relations & Education sub-committee meetings
• Provided individual coaching, training & support to new and returning district administrators & principals
• Served as President of Ct Valley Superintendent’s Roundtable Attended Franklin County Supt’s Roundtable
Greenfield Public Schools serves over 1,750 students in picturesque Franklin County. Greenfield Public Schools enjoys steady enrollment and the support of its community. Comprised of Preschool through High School, our small neighborhood schools; brand new LEED-certified High School; and strong cross-curricular focus makes Greenfield Public Schools a sought-after choice for families in Franklin County and beyond!

In 2017-2018, the Academy of Early Learning will celebrate its 11th year! Our theme-based K-5 elementary schools: books, gardening & sustainability; community connections; and Extended Learning Time. We offer an accelerated Math & Science Academy, housed at the Greenfield Middle School, and an innovative college partnership with Greenfield Community College on the GHS campus. Explore the "Schools" link to learn more! In addition, we offer social-emotional programs like Responsive Classroom and mindfulness, and have forged a consulting partnership with the New England Center for Children, an internationally recognized program, to enhance and vertically align our specialized services for children with autism from preschool to high school.

Greenfield Public Schools recognizes the value of our export teachers and an engaging, academically rigorous curriculum. We celebrate a thriving arts and music program with GHS (newly renovated and LEED Gold Certified in 2015), being recognized in 2017 as one of "America’s Best High Schools" as reported by U.S. News and World Report and as a MICA Silver winner! Families are welcomed through All School Assemblies, Bingo for Books Nights, Taste of World Cultures, PTO, and School Councils.

Please visit our site and drop us a line through our "We're Listening" feature. We love to hear from you!

Sincerely,
Jordana B. Harper
Superintendent of Schools

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**News**

We're PUMPed for these GPS events!

GPS is now hiring!
Greenfield Public Schools is seeking talented, dependable individuals for Instructional Assistants, Substitute Teachers, Cafeteria Workers, CDL Drivers, and more! Click here to see a full list of current job openings.

GHS' Environmental Science Club students join efforts with the Source to Sea Green River Clean Up!
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Sincerely,
Jodiara B. Harper
Superintendent of Schools

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GHS’ Environmental Science Club students join efforts with the Source to Sea Green River Clean Up!

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**We’re Listening!**

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Employment Campaign!

- Radio ads
  - GCC
  - YMCA
  - Foster's
  - Library
  - Sr. Center
- Social Media
- Job Fair

To advertise for current vacancies as approved in School Cmte budget.

→ All directed by Superintendent of Schools.
We are excited to announce the release of Project Here Games, a web-based app that students can access in and outside of the classroom. This novel app includes interactive games, quizzes, and scenarios that help students develop coping and decision-making skills. This app is available to all educators and students in Massachusetts and is an innovative tool that aims to prevent substance use among middle schoolers.

Visit projecthereregames.org

Introducing Our New School Coordinator

We are excited to announce that we recently hired Lauren Ansong to join the Project Here team as the School Coordinator.

Lauren will be supporting educators as they implement Project Here tools into their classrooms. Lauren will be available to visit your campus or hold virtual meetings to aid educators in identifying how Project Here tools can meet the needs of their students.

Please feel free to contact Lauren with any Project Here questions or if you'd
GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PERSONNEL & COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
Tuesday, September 18, 2018, 10:00 a.m.
Central Office Conference Room
195 Federal Street, Greenfield, MA 01301

Members Present: Don Alexander (Chair); Susan Eckstrom

Members Absent: Susan Hollins

Other School Staff: None

Citizens: None

I. Call to Order

Chair Alexander opened the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

II. Public Comment

None.

III. Superintendent’s Annual Goals

Passed over, as personnel needed for discussion not present.

IV. Adjournment

Member Eckstrom made a motion to go into recess. Chair Alexander seconded the motion. All in favor; none opposed.

Member Eckstrom made a motion to rescind the previous motion to go into recess. Chair Alexander seconded the motion. All in favor; none opposed.

Member Eckstrom made a motion to adjourn at 10:23 a.m. Chair Alexander seconded the motion. All in favor; none opposed.

V. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 16th, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adrienne Bedaw, Recording Secretary
On September 17, Project Here was featured in a press conference at the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General.

We are excited to announce the release of Project Here Games, a web-based app that students can access in and outside of the classroom. This novel app includes interactive games, quizzes, and scenarios that help students develop coping and decision-making skills. This app is available to all educators and students in Massachusetts and is an innovative tool that aims to prevent substance use among middle schoolers.

Coming Soon: Project Here Teacher Survey

Be on the lookout for a teacher survey that will be coming to you in the next month via email. The survey will be an opportunity for you to share how you're using Project Here in your classrooms.

Your valued feedback helps ensure that Project Here tools will continue to serve our students effectively.

Questions? Contact Senior Program Manager Carly Caminiti at ccaminiti@hrina.org or 617-279-2282.

Jaywalking: Angelo Thomas returns home to coach Greenfield boys basketball team

By JASON BUTYNISKI
Staff Writer
Monday, October 08, 2018

A recent phone call with Angelo Thomas included him singing the old Ozzy Osborne song, “Mama, I’m Coming Home.”

Indeed, the Greenfield High School graduate and recent Hopkins Academy boys basketball coach is coming back to the place his basketball career started. On Friday, the 43-year-old was officially hired as the new boys basketball coach for the Green Wave, replacing Tim Caplice, who spent the past four years as the Wave’s head coach.

“It feels great. It’s a great time to be in Greenfield right now. Academically, socially and sports-wise, it’s a great time to be in Greenfield,” Thomas said.

Thomas brings to the program a resume that has been littered with success since he began playing on the varsity team for the school as a freshman during the 1990-91 season, coincidentally around the same time the Osborne song was released. After serving as an assistant coach at Greenfield — three years as a middle school coach and three years as junior varsity coach — he left after the 2012-13 season (the same year Greenfield fell to South Hadley in the WMass Division 2 finals) to take the head coaching job at Hopkins Academy, his first varsity job.
In five years, Thomas took Hopkins from league doormat (the Golden Hawks went 3-17 in 2012-13) to become one of the most successful programs in western Mass. In his first year at Hopkins, the team went 12-8 and made it to the WMass quarterfinals, and since that time, the team has appeared in the WMass Division IV championship game for four consecutive years and counting. Beginning in the 2014-15 season, Hopkins won three straight WMass Division 4 titles, and last year the team made the WMass championship game before falling to Pioneer. In five years, Thomas compiled a 97-19 record at Hopkins and won a pair of Coach of the Year awards.

“The five years that I spent at Hopkins were five of the best years of my basketball journey, ever,” he said. “You can’t go through what we went through and not get chills, not get emotional, not smile, not cry. It’s a gamut of emotions. It was awesome. The relationships you develop, the hard work you put in and the lessons I learned, it’s what sports are all about.”

Thomas reached out to the athletic director and principal at Hopkins over the weekend and thanked both for the opportunity. Thomas believes the program is in good shape moving forward.

“Whoever the coach is coming there next, he will have some good pieces to work with,” he explained. “You want to leave the team better it was when you got there and I feel like I did that.”

The biggest reason for his decision to return to Greenfield was due to his family, which includes wife Tiffany and children Grayson, 8, and Savannah, nearly 4. Thomas lives in Greenfield and teaches physical education at Federal Street School in Greenfield and as his kids grow older, he said that traveling back-and-forth to Hadley every day for four months can be tough on his family.

“I would say being closer to my family was the biggest reason for me to come back,” he said. “During the four months of the season, I figured it out and it’s about 90 hours that I’m just driving back and forth. As my kids are getting older and are more involved in things, I don’t want to miss those things.”

Greenfield athletic director Mike Kuchieski said that Thomas has a lot to offer.

“He brings a lot to the table and with his background and being an educator in our school system, he should be able to help us out,” he said.
Thomas's first year with the program will also mark the 25th anniversary since he helped lead the 1993-94 Green Wave basketball team to its first-ever appearance in the state finals. During his three years on varsity, Thomas and the Green Wave went to the WMass championship game every year, and in 1994 the team finally won a WMass title. The Wave went on to play in the state finals, where they lost to Duxbury. After that, Thomas earned a Division I scholarship to play at the University of Maine, where he spent two years before transferring to Division II New Haven. After graduation, he had a contract offered to him from a professional team in Italy, but turned it down.

It was then that he began his career in coaching, serving as an assistant coach at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport, Conn. for five years before returning to live in his hometown in 2005. He immediately got involved in running youth leagues while working at the Greenfield YMCA, and also started up DRIVE Hoops with former GHS teammate Ross Burns. After one year at the YMCA, Thomas spent four years (2007 through 2011) working at Indoor Action Sports in Greenfield, where he continued to grow the sport. Thomas took all the basketball operations from IAS to DRIVE Hoops upon leaving in 2011, and he continues to run leagues and clinics today.

He said he wants to continue to grow the sport from the youth level up in Greenfield, just as it has been done at Pioneer and Frontier in particular. Former teammate Ross Burns and his brother Tim Burns — who each played Division I college hoop after graduating from GHS — currently work with professionals around the world and they have already been in touch with Thomas about doing a clinic in the area around the holidays.

“The stuff they will bring with them is the latest stuff you will see any basketball player doing,” Thomas said. “We don’t have to reinvent the wheel. Success starts at the youth level. As early as you can get these kids cohesive and going up through the ranks, that’s how it works.”

While he wants to grow the sport in the area, he believes the pieces are already in place at the high school to be successful.

“Success could be going 10-10, it could be finishing above .500,” he said. “There is a lot of pressure on me, because I put a lot of pressure on myself. This could be the start of something truly special.”
He has to wait less than two months to begin working with the team and during that time, the excitement is likely to turn to nervousness. But once he gets on the court with his new team, that will disappear and the joy of coaching his hometown program will officially set in.

“I’m super excited right now, but I think the nerves will come as we get closer to the season, that’s human nature,” he said. “With Greenfield being the hub of Franklin County, there is no reason that we can’t be successful, especially with all the good things going on at the high school right now.”

One man’s excitement can sometimes be another man’s despair. Such is the case with Caplice, who planned to return for a fifth season with the team.

“I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t disappointed and saddened by the decision,” Caplice said. “It was out of my control. I have too many fond memories with the program both as a player and a coach to try and stand in the way of this. I was thinking about it today, and I’ve been involved in the program for a third of my life. It’s still a little surreal. I’m grateful for coach Kuchieski and Donna Woodcock to hire a 27-year-old five years ago, and (GHS principal) Karin Patenaude has shown incredible support.”

Every coaching job at the school is posted internally for two weeks and anyone working in the district can apply. Thomas works at Federal Street School, while Caplice works in the high school but is not a member of the teacher’s union.

Caplice took over following the departure of Scott Thayer, who spent 16 years coaching the Green Wave before leaving following the 2013-14 season. When Caplice came into the program, he was experience a lot of turnover on the roster (with seven graduated seniors) and his first season saw the team go 3-17. The next season saw Greenfield finish 9-11 and miss the tournament by one win, and each of the past two years produced 7-13 records, although this past season the Green Wave finished second in the HL North and qualified for the WMass Division 3 tournament.

“I’m happy with the work we did. There’s always things in this game that you wish you could have done differently. I definitely feel like I learned from every situation,” Caplice explained. “I couldn’t be more thankful to have been the leader of that program for four years. I hope they get the success they are capable of.”
Caplice said that he is going to miss his players, as well as preparing to coach against the many talented coaches in the Hampshire League. He said when he took the job he did not realize just how great the coaching in the league was, and how different all the coaches are in the styles that they play. Those things have the 32-year-old interested in continuing his coaching career at some point.

“I’m definitely going to coach again,” he concluded. “When the right opportunity presents itself, I hope to pounce on it. I want to stay involved in the high school game as much as possible, because it’s something I’m really passionate about.”

Here’s to him landing on his feet.

*Jason Butynski is a Greenfield native and Recorder Sports Editor. His email address is jbutynski@recorder.com.*
News > Local (/News/Local/)

Risky behaviors among local teens decline

By JOSHUA SOLOMON
Staff Writer

Saturday, September 29, 2018

GREENFIELD — Youth substance abuse is at an all-time low in the 16 years of surveying the middle and high school students of Franklin County and the North Quabbin.


The one exception is nearly 1-in-3 middle or high school students have tried vaping, a sharp increase in the past few years as the market has gotten its footing, and just over 1-in-5 students said they have used so-called e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.

Combating the emerging youth culture around vaping – typically involving nicotine and sometimes marketed as an alternative to cigarettes – is both a recent campaign by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the subject of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s fight launched this September.

“It’s ‘Big Tobacco’ finding a new area to market their product,” Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan said when asked after Friday’s presentation about the developing vaping trends locally.

He emphasized people don’t know the long-term consequences of it, which means people should be cautious while more research is conducted on the potential harms from it.

Three times more students are reporting they have vaped in the past 30 days in 2018, since the last set of released data in 2015, from 7 percent to 22 percent. The
biggest leap came among 10th graders, with the data jumping from 5 to 29 percent. About 44 percent of high school seniors have said they have ever vaped in their lifetime.

Greenfield School Superintendent Jordana Harper wanted to reiterate, as others said during the day, that while the numbers are increasing, it's important students know that the majority of students are not vaping and doing these types of activities.

"Advertising can distort their perception of what's typical," Harper said.

Greenfield public schools with Greenfield Safe Schools Safe Streets Coalition received this month a five-year federal grant, along with the North Quabbin Community Coalition, for $625,000 to help develop a drug-free community.

Black and Latino students, at 29 and 26 percent, are slightly more likely to vape than white students, at 22 percent, while Asian students were the outlier at 4 percent. Lower income students were also slightly more likely to vape than higher income at 29 to 22 percent.

"We need to work a lot more with parents and get information out about the myths and realities about vaping and just what vaping looks like," Communities that Care Coalition leader Kat Allen said. "Make sure kids know that it's risky and there are health risks associated with vaping."

Additionally of concern for the Communities that Care Coalition was the unexplained rise in self-reported feelings associated with depression, specifically with young women.

The overall number of depressive symptoms is relatively steady overtime, 45 to 46 percent from 2015 to 2018.

Yet the data shows a steady, steep rise in these self-reported assessments of depression symptoms among girls since 2012.

In six years, depression symptoms among girls surveyed climbed by about 13 percentage points, up to 62 percent in 2018. Boys reported at 31 percent of them expressing depression symptoms this year, meaning that twice as many girls as boys are feeling depressed locally.

"It's an issue we need to explore further. We have lots of theories. We need to talk to young people and counselors and really get a better handle on what's driving this change," Allen said.

Some of the people at the meeting Friday said in their small group sessions that
they thought contributing factors were social media pressures, political climate, sufficient language around gender identity and the rising costs of college.

When asked about whether social media could be a part of it, particularly a culture around young people on their phones: “Let’s face it, fresh air is a lot better than sitting inside for several hours playing games,” Sullivan said. The district attorney further encouraged people to participate in afterschool activities like sports and said that cost barriers need to be evaluated so they are not a significant factor.

Overall though, the number of risk factors among local students is steadily decreasing.

“This is very encouraging and I’m really encouraged so many people are in this room having this conversation and that student health and wellness is getting this level of community support,” Harper said.

In 2018, the average number of risk factors students have is down to seven out of a total number of 20. The data shows that the more risk factors someone has, the more likely they are to participate in activities like binge drinking and drug use.

Despite legalization of marijuana, use has not gone up significantly, although perception of whether it is harmful has decreased heavily in recent years.

“The community is really excited to see these positive trends continue,” Allen said. “We all continue to be surprised at how positive many of these trends are. One big surprise is marijuana hasn't gone up. Family dynamics continue to improve from teens themselves. I think everyone is really delighted to see that and we're all trying to figure out how to help these trends continue and use these positive trends to motivate us to do more.”

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